

THE

PEASANT of AUBURN;

OR,

THE EMIGRANT.

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OR,
THE E M I G R A N T.

A
P O E M.

INSCRIBED TO THE
EARL of CARLISLE.

By T. COOMBE, D. D.

R
“The short and simple Annals of the Poor.”

GRAY.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR P. ELMSLY, IN THE STRAND, AND J. ROBSON,
IN NEW BOND-STREET.

MDCCLXXXIII.

THE
PRESENT OF AUBURN;

THE E M I G R A N T.

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E A R L O F C A R L I S L E.

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PEASANT of AUBURN;*

T H E

O R,

THE E M I G R A N T.

DARK was the sky, and fatal was the morn,
When first from AUBURN's vale I roam'd forlorn.
The neighbouring swains came pensive o'er the sea,
And parting breath'd their last kind prayers for me.
Ah! gentle souls, your prayers for me how vain,
The man of sorrow, penury, and pain.

Thus EDWIN mourn'd, pale, melancholy, slow,
Where wild OHIO's founding waters flow.

* It is almost superfluous to inform the reader that the hint of this little poem is taken from Dr. Goldsmith's Deserted Village.

The sun set low'ring on the plaints he made,
And savage howlings doubly gloom'd the shade.

O Thou, in publick toils with glory tried,
Whose high-born honours are thy humblest pride,
Whose private worth, in fame's proud fane enroll'd,
Time shall emblaze in characters of gold;
Illustrious HOWARD! shield th' unpolish'd lays
Which twine this cypress wreath around thy bays.
And whilst thy breast matures each patriot plan
That gladdens life, and man endears to man,
Hear what big woes the village group beset,
By AUBURN's pensive bard foretold too well.

Night o'er the scene her dusky horrors drew,
The stars burn'd dim, the rapid whirlwind flew;
E'en the lone cot denied its cheering ray,
As o'er the wild the wanderer urg'd his way.

No

No more the birds prolong'd their soothing strain,
No more the landscape stole a pang from pain;
In every bush destruction seem'd to hide,
And hoarse beneath him foam'd the fullen tide.
Amidst uncoffin'd bones, as thus he pass'd,
Where many a gallant Briton breath'd his last,*
From distant hills strange fires began to glow,
That mark'd the ravage of the barbarous foe.
The scene, the hour, renew'd the trickling tear,
When, thus, with mingled groans, the mournful fear.

God of my life! protect me as I stray,
Where human wolves in murd'rous ambush lay.

Once I was blest beyond the peasant's lot,
In humble neatness rose my little cot.
I saw my whitening fleece the down adorn,
I saw my valley wave with golden corn,

* This part of America was the scene of Braddock's defeat.

I saw my duteous children round me bloom,
Nor envied pride its palace and its plume.
Pleas'd with what heaven had lent, and far from strife,
Calm, unprov'd, I walk'd the vale of life.
But vain the humblest hope the poor can form,
When fierce oppression wings th' unfeeling storm.
Nor peace, nor love, nor merit's modest woe,
Can or avert, or mitigate the blow.
Alas ! regardless of the suppliant train,
The tyrant lord usurps the whole domain.
The peasant's glebe, his garden's decent bound,
The shade he rear'd, the lane with sweet-briar crown'd,
All, all must yield, as wills imperious pride,
And e'en the straw-thatch'd cottage is denied.
Hence, at this hour, by desperate sorrow led,
A banish'd man, I roam the world for bread.

Yet witness heaven, tho' such thy chang'd decrees,
Ne'er did I waste my hours in loitering ease ;

Ne'er

Ne'er did thy blessings prompt a wish to stray,
Health nerv'd my limbs, and virtue blest'd my day.
Constant at dawn to hardy toils I rose,
Brav'd the bleak winds, and desolating snows;
Whilst sweet contentment lent her magick power,
Softened the gale, and warm'd the frozen shower.
Still sad remembrance fondly calls to view
The field where once the branching poplar grew.
'Twas there, when spring renew'd the ploughman's toil,
My long-drawn furrow turn'd the rugged soil;
There, with my fickle, thro' long summer days,
I work'd, regardless of the noontide blaze;
And there the labouring band, as leisure sway'd,
The bough-crown'd reaper, and the village maid,
Led up their sports along the bordering green,
Whilst age look'd on, and blest'd the harmless scene.
Such were my toils, in days too bright to last,
Such joys were mine, but all those joys are past!

B

Mean

Mean tho' I was, and circled too with care,
Yet, blest with little, I had still to spare,
No neighbour's sorrows but assail'd my breast,
No poorer brother left my door unblest.
To all my mite, to some, more singly dear,
I gave the tender tribute of a tear.
Oft times, returning from the task of day,
I hail'd the weary trav'ler on his way,
Remark'd the hour of rest was nearly come,
And press'd the stranger to my social home.
Heedless of future ills, the playful train,
To meet their fire, came shouting o'er the plain,
With eager joy their little news convey'd,
Or round the green their mimick dance display'd.
Perhaps, some neighbouring swain of genial soul
Would lift the latch, and join our sober bowl;
And, whilst his soothing tales engag'd the guest,
Of flighted love, or modest worth distressed,

Whate'er

Whate'er our dairy, or our fields afford,
In frugal plenty smil'd upon the board.
Blest social home ! and ye dear distant bowers !
Scenes of my youth, and all my blisful hours,
Where'er by fortune's hand neglected thrown,
This heart, this faithful heart, is all your own.
E'en now, weak nature, rous'd to keener pain,
Dwells on your charms, and bleeds in every vein.

Good heaven ! what anguish wrung this boding heart,
When the rough boatswain gave the word to part.
Then first the tear, at nature's bidding, fell,
As bleeding Friendship press'd its long farewell.
Pale on mine arm Connubial Mildness hung,
Fond Filial Duty round my bosom clung.
Firm for their sakes, along the surf-beat strand,
And whispering peace, I led the weeping band ;
Deceiv'd their thoughts from AUBURN's much-lov'd plain,
And talk'd of happier seats beyond the main.

Poor

THE PEASANT OF AUBURN.

Poor aged man! since that eventful day,
Despair and terror mark'd thee for their prey.
War, sickness, famine, bursting on thine head,
Mock thy vain toils, and weigh thee to the dead.

Ah me! the words our pious Preacher spoke,
When first to him my mournful mind I broke.
“ EDWIN,” he said, with looks of kind dismay,
“ Earth’s meteor hopes but glitter to betray.
“ Thou canst not fly from God’s all-chast’ning hand,
“ Storms sweep the ocean, discord blasts the land.
“ No change of climate can reverse our doom,
“ Life’s various roads all center in the tomb.”
Thus the meek sage my rash resolve repress,
Whilst tears of pity bath’d his hoary breast.
Oh! had I listen’d to his wise alarms,
Then had I died at home in friendship’s arms.

Twelve

Twelve tedious weeks we plough'd the wintry main,
And hop'd the port, but hop'd alas in vain,
Till left of heaven, and press'd for daily bread,
Each gaz'd at each, and hung the sickly head.
Two little sons, my hope, my humble pride,
Too weak to combat, languish'd, wail'd, and died.
Stretch'd on the deck the breathless cherubs lay,
As buds put forth in April's stormy day.
Not EMMA's self remain'd my woes to cheer,
Borne with her babes upon a watery bier.
Five days she struggled with the fever's fire,
The sixth sad morn beheld my faint expire.
These trembling lips her lips convulsive prest,
These trembling hands sustain'd her sinking breast;
These trembling hands discharg'd each mournful rite,
Sooth'd her last pang, and seal'd her dying fight.
To the same deep their dear remains were given,
Their mingled spirits wing'd their flight to heaven.

One only daughter, in life's vernal pride,
Surviv'd the wreck that whelm'd my all beside.
Snatch'd from the peace of death, and loathing day,
On bleak Henlopen's coast the mourner lay.
These aged arms her languid body bore
Through the rude breakers to that ruder shore.
Mercy, sweet heaven! and did the pitying storm
Spare but for deeper ills that angel form!
Blest had we sunk unheeded in the wave,
And mine and Lucy's been one common grave.
But I am lost, a worn-out, ruin'd man,
And fiends complete what tyranny began.

Much had I heard, from men unus'd to feign,
Of this New World, and Freedom's gentle reign.
'Twas fam'd that here, by no proud master spurn'd,
The poor man ate secure the bread he earn'd;
That verdant vales were fed by brighter streams
Than my own Medway, or the silver Thames;

Fields

Fields without bounds spontaneous fruitage bore,
And peace and virtue blest'd the favour'd shore.
Such were the hopes which once beguil'd my care,
Hopes form'd in dreams, and baseless as the air.

Is this, O dire reverse, is this the land,
Where nature sway'd, and peaceful worthies plann'd !
Where injur'd freedom, through the world impell'd,
Her hallow'd seat, her last asylum held !
Ye glittering towns that crown th' Atlantic deep,
Witness the change, and as ye witness weep.
Mourn all ye streams, and all ye fields deplore
Your slaughter'd sons, your verdure stain'd with gore.

Time was, blest time, to weeping thousands dear,
When all that poets picture flourish'd here.
Then War was not, Religion smil'd and spread,
Arts, Manners, Learning rear'd their polish'd head ;
Commerce, her sails to every breeze unfurl'd,
Pour'd on these coasts the treasures of the world.

Past are those halcyon days. The very land
Droops a weak mourner, wither'd and unmann'd.
Brothers 'gainst brothers rise in vengeful strife,
The parent's weapon drinks the children's life,
Sons, leagued with foes, unsheath their impious sword,
And gore the nurturing breast they late ador'd.

How vain my search to find some lowly bower,
Far from those scenes of death, this rage for power;
Some quiet spot, conceal'd from every eye,
In which to pause from woe, and calmly die.
No such retreat these boundless shades embrace,
But man with beast divides the bloody chace.
What tho' some cottage rise amid the gloom,
In vain its pastures spring, its orchards bloom;
Far, far away the wretched owners roam,
Exiles like me, the world their only home.

Here, as I trace my melancholy way,
The prowling INDIAN snuffs his wonted prey.

Ha—should I meet him in his dusky round—
Late in these woods I heard his murderous found—
Still the deep war-whoop vibrates on mine ear,
And still I hear his tread, or seem to hear.
Hark, the leaves rustle! what a shriek was there!
'Tis he! 'tis he! his triumphs rend the air.
Hold, coward heart, I'll answer to the yell,
And chase the murderer to his gory cell.
Savage!—but oh! I rave—o'er yonder wild,
E'en at this hour he drives my only child;
She, the dear source and fother of my pain,
My tender daughter, drags the captive chain.

Ah my poor Lucy! in whose face, whose breast,
My long-lost EMMA liv'd again confest,
Thus robb'd of thee, and every comfort fled,
Soon shall the turf infold this wearied head;
Soon shall my spirit reach that peaceful shore,
Where bleeding friends unite, to part no more.

D

Then

Then shall I cease to rue the fatal morn
 When first from AUBURN'S vale I roam'd forlorn.

He spoke—and frantick with the sad review,
 Prone on the shore his tottering limbs he threw.
 Life's crimson strings were bursting round his heart,
 And his torn soul was throbbing to depart;
 No pitying friend, no meek-ey'd stranger near,
 To tend his throes, or calm them with a tear.—
 Angels of grace, your golden pinions spread,
 Temper the winds, and shield his houseless head.
 Let no rude sounds disturb life's awful close,
 And guard his relicks from inhuman foes.
 O haste, and waft him to those radiant plains,
 Where fiends torment no more, and love eternal reigns.

F I N I S.